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—3— 772 Vortigern under Consideration, with general Remarks on the
Saturday, May 21. 1857. Shakspeare Manuscripts, &c. 1796

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VORTIGERN
UNDER CONSIDERATION;
WITH
GENERAL REMARKS
ON
MR. JAMES BOADEN'S LETTER TO
GEORGE STEEVENS, Esq.
RELATIVE TO THE
MANUSCRIPTS, DRAWINGS, SEALS, &c.
ASCRIBED TO
SHAKESPEARE,
AND IN THE POSSESSION OF
SAMUEL IRELAND, Esq.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR H. LOWNDES, NO. 77, FLEET-STREET.

1796.

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May 1873

ADVERTISEMENT.

The Author of the following Pages having considered the MSS. FAC SIMILIA, &c. ascribed to Shakespeare, and published by Mr. Ireland, submits to the public his arguments to speak for themselves, declining all *pompous display of name*, as he has no FAME to add to, and assured that none can be founded on a mere controversy.

Middle Temple.

VORTIGERN, &c.

UNDER CONSIDERATION.

WHEN a Play, said to be written by the immortal Shakespeare, the *Poet of Nature*, (as stiled by Dr. Johnson) is announced for a speedy representation, it is natural that every one's curiosity should be excited, and impartial persons must certainly wish that that curiosity may not be disappointed. The present dearth of Dramatic Entertainments renders me, I own, anxious that the Piece may be *legitimate*, and for this reason I have been considering within myself all the *probabilities*: for though some have *positively* asserted, from *conjecture*, that the Play is not the production of the immortal Bard, yet I would not from *conjecture* insist that it *was*—only that it *may*—

First of all, let us consider the character of Shakespeare. His Biographers agree that he was

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the least ambitious of all poets, and so very indifferent about his future fame, that he paid little or no attention to any corrections, and, derided as it may be, the performers *did* take liberties with his pieces; and where is the wonder—do they not take liberties *now*? That his MSS. were always in a scattered state is likewise proved from an account that two large chests filled with Shakespeare's loose papers, were in the hands of an ignorant baker in Warwick, who married one of our Poet's descendants, and which were carelessly thrown about as garret lumber and litter, to the particular knowledge of Sir William Bishop: This carelessness in our Author renders it very *probable* that he had written many Plays which were never acted; laid aside, perhaps, for a future opportunity and corrections. What particularly strikes me that VORTIGERN may be original, is, the subject of the Play, and the MSS. with which it is attended. The chief reason which led Pope to doubt that the *Play of Edward the Third*, found by Theobald, was really written by Shakespeare, was its being unaccompanied with any other papers or notes, and particularly the want of his name; for it was the ancient custom for authors to subscribe their names, instead of saying (according to the modern fashion) *Finis*, or *The End*. This circumstance (though laughed at by the *ignorant*) is greatly in favour of the MSS. in the possession of Mr. Ireland.

land. Theobald had no other probates than the *date* and *style*, which were consequently disbelieved by Mr. Pope, the letter being also deemed imperfect.

There is an uniformity in the hand-writing, which I think beyond the power of the most ingenious *forger* to have preserved, and the signature of the name appears exactly similar to the *Fac Simile* of Shakespeare's hand-writing, given in the Gentleman's Magazine for 1789, which I had previously examined.

The subject, however, is one great point to be considered. Shakespeare, we find, was partial to the History of England, and seemed inclined to dramatize every part which would admit it—true—VORTIGERN is a character very little noticed by Historians; but though our Poet's learning in Greek and Latin is disputed, it is acknowledged that he was well versed in the most secret parts of History, and notwithstanding the self-sufficiency of *some* modern Dramatists, none but a Shakespeare *could* produce a Play *fit for the Stage*, on so confined a subject; besides, I think it very likely that any man who attempted an imposition, would have chosen a more extensive field. Neither do I think it probable that any man who had ability enough to write like Shakespeare, would transfer the fame to

his *manes*—sure, when *such* authors are much wanting, he would triumph—avowedly in his genius—nor run the hazard of being called an *impostor*, when he might attain the honourable appellation of a SECOND SHAKESPEARE. Ambition is nowhere more conspicuous than among writers, who have frequently preferred fame to emolument.

But what impressed me most of all with a notion that the Play may be original, were the *pitiful* allusions and *mean* paragraphs made use of to defeat its appearance : these lead me to imagine that *some* are afraid the Play of VORTIGERN, especially as it is to be succeeded by another ascribed to Shakespeare, may probably correct the present vitiated state of the Drama, and that *their* flimsy productions will not be able to withstand so formidable an opposition. These certainly are natural conclusions to draw, when we find one already has stood up as an *oracle* to foretell its fate, and damn the piece *before* it is played. But should not VORTIGERN be submitted to the public for their opinion ? why be judged by an individual ? Why fall under the condemnation of a SECRET tribunal ? and be denied what is our country's boast, a candid, OPEN TRIAL ! These sentiments, I confess, arise from perusing a letter from Mr. Boaden to George Steevens, Esq. on the subject of these MSS. wherein he pretends to respect the name of Shakespeare, and yet in-

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sults the Poet, by insinuating that any one can imitate him—I say, any one, when he gives *himself* as one example—but of this more hereafter. Let any impartial person look over Mr. Boaden's pages, and he must certainly think him exceedingly *interested* in the business, when he cannot treat it in any degree *coolly*, and what renders his warmth more ridiculous, is, that it proceeds chiefly from *conjecture*—he *thinks*—and then *INSISTS*—the *few* arguments which he makes use of, unfortunately are grounded upon *ERROR*, which I shall, in the course of these remarks, take the liberty of pointing out, and consequently prove that the MSS. in question *may be* the productions of our immortal Bard.

In respect to Mr. Ireland's preface, I am silent; assured that even that gentleman must say a great deal from *conjecture*, and, I think, whatever he publishes *from himself*, should by no means affect the papers in question.

Mr. Boaden thinks proper to remind us of the *forgeries* of the ingenious Chatterton; I mean, (for I would by no means alter the *elegant* phraseology of Mr. B.) the *PRODIGIOUS* Chatterton, but there is a great difference in the manner wherein the papers supposed to be produced by that youth and the MSS. in the possession of Mr. Ireland were offered

to public view ; the former were discovered *by degrees*, but here is a discovery of a number of papers *at once*—a number, which I think no impostor could contrive and execute during his whole life—if he could, he must be indeed a GIANT to the *prodigious* Chatterton.

THE ORTHOGRAPHY.

Mr. Boaden has attacked the Orthography of those papers, though we are told by an ingenious writer, “ that in the English, the orthography has “ been more vague and unascertained than in any “ other language. Every author, and almost “ every printer, had his particular system ; they “ not only differed from one another, but there “ were scarce any that consisted with himself ; the “ same word frequently appeared with two or “ three different faces in the same page, not to say “ line.” Former ages were remarkable for a paucity and multiplicity of letters ; the latter prevailed in Shakespeare’s days, as the *genuine* letters of Mary Queen of Scots, Queen Elizabeth, &c. &c. prove. The specimen which Mr. Boaden gives us of Spencer’s orthography, is rather curious, as it exhibits a great deal of *modern* taste :

“ So

" So well hee woo'd her, and so well he wrought her,
 " With faire entreety and sweet blandishment
 " That at the length unto a bay he brought her,
 " So as shee to his speeches was content
 " To lend an ear and softly to relent."

Who would suppose from this example given without selection, as it occurred upon opening the volume, that Spencer was (as Mr. Boaden describes him) "unusually lax in orthography, and" "that the difficulties of his stanza compelled him" "to frequent innovations to produce, what to the" "eye at least, should look like the termination of" "rhymes." I presume much better rhyme than the above could not be found in the *Poet Laureat's* Odes; and if that be a true example of the ancient spelling, there is very little difference between it and the modern. How is it possible to judge whether or no these manuscripts were the production of Shakespeare by the orthography, when it is well known, that Shakespeare *varied* in spelling his *own name*?

It is the opinion of our most eminent Antiquarians, that the ancient orthography of *manuscript* consisted in more letters than that of the *printed* books of the same time, and the reason given for this opinion is very natural; in *writing* they made use of a superfluous number of letters from *habit*; nay, some go so far, as to think, from a desire of being very *plain*, and to *prevent mistakes*; though

among

among us, unaccustomed to those seeming long words, it would no doubt cause much misunderstanding and confusion; but in *printing* this was *inconvenient*; they were obliged to abridge the letters, and by gradually diminishing them, orthography was reduced to the present state. These arguments are founded by comparing genuine MSS. of old times with print of the same date, whereby that difference now pointed out by Mr. Boaden was seen *before*—this therefore is no *new* discovery, and the cavillers, (for I presume there are more than one, as more than one must suffer considerably from the restoration of *sense* to the Drama) must compare these manuscripts with others known to be genuine, before they condemn the orthography. Had the spelling been similar to the first printed edition of Shakespeare, there had been greater cause for suspicion.

AUTOGRAPH, PAPER, &c.

It is acknowledged that the Autograph and Paper belonging to these MSS. have all the appearance of originality—they have been examined by the first artists, who coincide in this opinion. To obviate this, Mr. B. insinuates, how easy it is to procure paper of this age, and imitate seals and autographs; but I think this cannot be done
with

with all the facility which he imagines—there must be a COMBINATION to effect so much and and greater genius's than I think the present age can produce, to suggest all those little domestic occurrences, which though trifling in themselves, are great confirmations of the originality of those papers. Where is that society of men, with all their boasted abilities and professed powers of imitation, that could undertake the task ; and if it was possible to execute so great an imposture, where is the reward for so much pains and trouble ? Men possessed of but moderate abilities would not, I presume, wish to *sacrifice* them—if the originality of the paper is proved by the water-marks, &c. &c. it is very probable, that the autographs, seals, &c. are equally original. To be too credulous, I own is weakness ; but to be incredulous where there are some very great appearances of truth, may well justify our calling the present the *Age of Infidelity*.

The uniformity which may be seen in all these papers supposed to be written by Shakspeare, shows the *improbability* of their being a fabrication ; for though we sometimes see the difference of the author's pens, and those variations which the several periods of writing must occasion, still it is apparently the writing of *one* hand—if a forgery, it must therefore have been the work of *one* man, and what immense labour must it have cost !——

Here I must take notice of Mr. Boaden's insinuations, " Mr. Ireland is not an incurious man—he draws, he engraves, he has a taste for the black letter;" and again—" He might have been more circumspect and rendered detection less easy. It is, however, probable that eagerness to execute what he had once planned, narrowed his enquiries, &c.—" Surely Mr. Steevens, whose goodness of heart is equal to his sense and judgment, must feel himself hurt in being addressed to, by a writer who wantonly attacks another's character. Is Mr. Ireland, because he is versed in antiquities, because he has a taste and abilities, to be accused of the intention of deceiving? Be the papers genuine or not, his intention, I am sure, is good; and if they are not genuine, *he* must have been deceived himself. Had these papers fallen into the possession of a man *without taste*, they might still have been in obscurity; or had the owner entertained bad intentions, they might, for the satisfaction of some, have been suppressed. For my part, I am inclined to think the more favourably of the MSS. since espoused by a gentleman of taste and knowledge.

MS. OF KING LEAR.

BECAUSE this MS. does not agree with the printed copies, it is therefore disbelieved by Mr. Boaden to be a copy *written* by Shakespeare; but I must agree with Mr. Ireland, in thinking this a very strong argument in its favour: in this copy the author seems to have committed his ideas to paper with rapidity; his pen endeavours to keep pace with his thoughts, and all the *errata* are additional proofs of authenticity. Shakespeare, who wrote so much, must certainly have written in *haste*, and very likely authorised his friends to make corrections. The want of *measure*, which Mr. Boaden takes notice of, is no argument against it. Dr. Johnston's Tragedy of IRENE, was written at first like prose. A Poet of Nature writes harmony at once; he goes by his *ear*, and does not reckon the lines on his fingers. The very quotations which Mr. Boaden makes from this MS. and compares with the printed copy, discover, in my opinion, the genuine work of the Poet. A fabricator, for fear of detection, would, in all probability, have been *too* correct. Mr. B. to show his capability of judging, gives us the following *wise* remarks on these lines:

“ And, with *Adam-like* nakedness outface
 “ The wind and persecution of the sky.”

“ If this be meant for metre, it is dissonance ; if
 “ it be given as an improved reading, it is folly ;
 “ when Adam was naked, the elements were yet
 “ unagitated, and when Creation was punished
 “ for his transgression, Adam was no longer na-
 “ ked——”

How admirably argued this ! but, pray, is an epithet to be stretched to a *whole* sentence ?—
 The application is to nakedness *only* ; it is not *the wind and persecution of the sky were LIKE ADAM*——
 As to the dissonance of the line, we may find others elsewhere equally as bad ; the best judges of versification have made some deviations. Even Mr. Boaden himself, who is such an advocate for lines *metrically smooth*, and who tells us, “ So nice
 “ and curious is Dramatic Poetry, that something
 “ is derived from the collocation of sounds, independent both of justness in the sense and metrical exactness in the numbers. The sense without this garb is not poetry, be it ever so pregnant, and though the syllables should scan with the utmost correctness, the requisite number would never constitute poetry unless they had the glowing diction which results from the happiest choice of words in the sweetest consonancy of numbers——” Who that peruses the last dramatic

matic production of this *competent* judge could suppose his knowledge so extensive? Where is the *glowing diction* in the following lines, offered as *metre*, of a letter, read *three times* in the course of *three acts*?

“ To Ratibor.

“ All is accomplished.

“ The deadly mixture is, by your command,

“ Infused, and Ida administers the draught.”

SECRET TRIBUNAL.

Where is also the happy choice of words, and sweet consonancy of numbers in the following—another extract from the same?

“ Health and lengthened happiness of life,

“ Attend my much rever'd and valu'd friends.

“ We feel this honour sensibly, my lord,

“ May we indulge a hope, your aunt recovers?

From a perusal of this author's works, *may we indulge a hope* HE'LL WRITE LIKE SHAKESPEARE?

Non possumus videre nostra mala,

Alii simul delinquant censores sumus.

“ Though our own faults we never can descry,

“ We see another's with the quickest eye.”

As to *when* KING LEAR was written, the most knowing of all Shakespeare's expositors can never ascertain the exact period; it might have been
written

written many years previous to representation, and the time of representation can only be conjectured from circumstances. In spite therefore, of Mr. Boaden's examination, these manuscripts of *King Lear*, *Hamlet*, &c. MAY be genuine.

QUEEN ELIZABETH's LETTER

TO

SHAKESPEARE.

TO commit forgeries of Shakespeare, it certainly was not necessary to attempt an imitation of *Queen Elizabeth's* writing, &c. but this letter which is given as a further testimony of the others being genuine, has been it seems, the most objectionable, and the only place where Mr. Boaden seems to argue, is here ; but, as I have before hinted, he *errs* in his arguments.

In

In this letter our Poet (then an Actor) is invited by Queen Elizabeth, to amuse the Court at Hampton, during the holydays, particularly as Lord Leiceſter was to be there.

Mr. Boaden is ſatisfied in his own mind, that the lateſt period in which his Lordſhip could attend to ſuch entertainments was in 1585, at which time Shakeſpeare was only 21 *years* of age.

I will for a while ſuppoſe this aſſertion to be juſt, for the ſake of ſhewing, that even *then*, Shakeſpeare muſt have been a celebrated character, when according to Aubrey the Antiquarian, he came to London, and was an Actor about 18.—Thus it is recorded :——

“ WILLIAM SHAKESPEAR’s father was a
 “ butcher ; and I have been told heretofore, by
 “ ſome of the neighbours, that when he was a
 “ boy, he exerciſed his father’s trade ; but when
 “ he killed a calfe, he could do it in a *high ſtile*,
 “ and make a ſpeech. This William being in-
 “ clined naturally to poetry and acting, come to
 “ London ; I gueſs about 18, and was an actor at
 “ one of the playhouſes, and did act exceeding
 well.

“ well. He began early to make essays in * Dramatic Poetry, which at that time was very lowe; and his playes took well. He was a handsome well shaped man, very good company, and of a very ready, and pleasant, and smooth wit.”

If Shakespeare commenced actor about eighteen, and began early to make Essays in Dramatic Poetry, there is little doubt but that he acquired celebrity *before* he was twenty-one, particularly as *that time was very low*. If the invitation had then been sent in 1585, where is the wonder?—Abilities like Shakespeare’s, could never have been *three years* latent, especially as the English Drama was then in a very humble state: but though Mr. Boaden affirms that his Lordship could not attend to such *holiday fooleries* after the above year, I am of opinion he might, especially towards the latter end of his life, agreeable to the history of this Nobleman.

After the Earl’s inglorious campaign, when he went over to Holland at the head of the English

* It appears from this, that a distinction was made between dramatic and other Poetry. There is no doubt therefore, but Shakespeare produced Plays before his Poem of *Venus and Adonis*. It is mentioned in the Companion to the Playhouse, that he commenced Author without a PATRON.

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auxiliaries, having committed the government into the hands of the Council of State, and signed an act of restriction, whereby he reserved to himself the authority over all the Governors of cities, provinces, and forts, and took from the Council of State several branches of its jurisdiction, he returned to England in 1586, and according to Camden, received "extraordinary favour" from the Queen. As he did not set out for Holland again till June 1587, he might in this interval have seen Shakespeare very often perform. His absence now was only for *five* months, for he returned to England the November following, when Lord Buckhurst brought a strong accusation against him at the Council Board, on account of his mismanagement in the Low Countries; and here again he received "extraordinary favour" from the Queen, by being openly protected by her. At this period he might also have seen Shakespeare.

The Earl when made Lieutenant General of the army assembled at Tilbury, had no opportunity of exerting his military abilities, the Spanish armada being defeated and dispersed, of course he was at liberty to indulge himself, and accordingly he did, for we find in August 1588, he repaired to his castle at Kenelworth (which he became possessed of through the liberality of the Queen), and

no doubt this was the time, when, according to Camden, he entertained Queen Elizabeth and the Court seventeen days “ with all the varieties and “ magnificence both of feasting and shews, in “ which time he spent 320 hogsheads of ordinary “ beer.” As the Queen received entertainments from the Earl, she no doubt *gave* some, and in all probability invited Shakespeare to amuse her favourite with *shews*; and why should it be deemed impossible, that *this* invitation from the Queen to Shakespeare was sent at this time, when our Bard had attained the age of twenty-four? The Earl’s death was sudden, (for which reason it was attended with some suspicion of poison) therefore he might have seen Shakespeare play a very short time before his death.

This letter being addressed to Shakespeare at the GLOBE by Thames, it is contended by Mr. Boaden that the *Globe* was not in existence till 1596—he mentions the Water Poet as his authority, but does not give us the words. I wish he had, for I should have been glad to have heard some of the eccentricities of TAYLOR. He bids us SEE his works, it is true; but there are few can tell WHERE. He also refers us to the contract between HENSLOWE and PETER STREETE, to build a Playhouse in the year 1599, exactly similar to that *newly erected* Theatre, called *the Globe* on the Bank.—I dare say

say DRURY-LANE will be called a NEW Theatre these twenty years to come. But if the NEW Globe was not erected till 1596, might not there have been an OLD Globe in 1585?—We read that “ In 1603, a licence was granted under the Privy Seal, by King James I. to Shakespeare, together with Fletcher, Philips, Hemmings, Condel, Burbage, &c. authorizing them to act plays, not only at their USUAL house, the GLOBE, on the Bankside, Southwark, but in any other part of the kingdom.” From the word USUAL, Shakespeare must certainly have been *accustomed* to this place. It was from this licence, that the performers were first of all called *His Majesty’s Servants*; for we read also, that *long before this*, they were called the *Servants of the Lord Chamberlain*.—When Shakespeare commenced author, (and according to Aubrey, he was author of *Dramatique Poetry* at a very *early age*) there were ten Theatres open—six that were stiled public Theatres, and four private houses; and is it not natural to suppose the Globe was one, especially as it is said, that “ most, if not ALL of “ Shakespeare’s Plays were performed at the “ Globe, which was an hexagonal building, “ partly open to the weather, and partly covered “ with reeds. Here they performed by daylight, “ and by candlelight at BLACKFRIARS, which was “ a *private Playhouse*.”

That there was some kind of a Theatre in Southwark, (when Shakespeare commenced actor) is evident, from the few anecdotes we have of Ben Jonson, who went on the stage at the *same time*, and performed at a Theatre in SOUTHWARK. But why was this *new* building called the GLOBE?—A *Globe*, I understand to be a round body, having every part of its surface equally distant from the centre—an *hexagonal* edifice could not with much propriety derive this name from its form, and I doubt if it was a *regular hexagon*. The Theatre in Shoreditch was called the *Curtain*, a name evidently derived from the *Stage*, and as the Stage is an epitome of the “Great GLOBE itself;” it is not at all unlikely that Shakespeare should make it the *general* appellation of whatever Theatre he was concerned in:—whether on the BANKSIDE or BLACKFRIARS. He himself said——

“ All the World’s a Stage,”

and would consequently represent the Stage a *World* in miniature.

But there is another conjecture. The Play-houses in those days were, if not always, at least, generally in *Gardens*; and it is very likely, particularly as they performed in the day-time, that there was some inn, tavern, or public-house adjoining; which, either from a *sign*, (signs being
very

very common in those days) or some other cause, received the name of *the Globe*—a name which belongs to several taverns to this present day. What renders this conjecture very probable, is, that the ROSE Theatre most indubitably derived its name from a tavern or public house—the name of the *Globe* might therefore originally belong to some inn or the like ; and consequently the Theatre, be so called, whether NEW or OLD, and the company of performers, though at Blackfriars, be known also by the name of the *Globe Company*.

I mention these conjectures, which I trust will be found as reasonable as any on the other side,—to show how presumptuous the assertion—“ there “ was no Theatre called *The Globe*, at that period.”



SHAKESPEARE'S LOVE LETTER

AND

LOCK OF HAIR.

IF an original, this Love Letter is a precious relic, and though ridiculed by Mr. Boaden, I think it by no means unlikely to be both the *genuine* writing
and

and style of our Bard, particularly from a circumstance overlooked by Mr. Boaden—the *Lock of Hair which accompanies it*. Wonderful ingenuity and talents must they have had indeed, who could have continued and executed such a variety of matter. The author (says Mr. Boaden) must have been sixteen years of age when he wrote this letter; I dare say it was produced at a very early age—this therefore renders it more valuable—but, continues he, “it is utterly dissimilar from the only specimen “ of his epistolary style which he has left us”—and then refers us to his DEDICATIONS to SOUTHAMPTON. It was the fashion, I acknowledge, to court PATRONS, but I never understood they were courted and addressed with all that tenderness and solicitude which mark the *billet doux* of Cupid—though he was *inscribing* his *Lock of Hair* to the Lady, I would have doubted the truth, had he used the common language of a DEDICATION.

LETTER

LETTER TO LORD SOUTHAMPTON, &c.

MR. BOADEN thinks the application of *his Grace* to an Earl, was not the formulary of that time. I am of opinion these ceremonies were so extensive, that they had no formulary. The title of *Grace* however, is very ancient, and it was formerly given to Majesty—the phrase implies *great goodness*, &c. and therefore might be used by Shakespeare as a particular mark of respect. The address, *My Lord*, is not so very recent as Mr. Boaden thinks; in the *Secret History of Queen Elizabeth*, published some short time after her death, we may find it used in the then conversation.

The reply to this Letter from the Earl, seems to have posed Mr. Boaden, as he leaves it to the investigation of another. There is more modesty in this than any other part of the letter, and no doubt as it has puzzled Mr. Boaden, but others will find it equally difficult. Hence it appears, the matter requires consideration, and no man of course, should draw *hasty* conclusions; for my part the evidences are so various and striking, that I confess myself inclined to give them credit; but perhaps I am one of those *careless* readers, who,

Mr.

Mr. Boaden hints, may at first view be taken with the amazing plausibility of the manuscripts, as they are cloathed in a fashion of orthography, which some may think ancient, because obscure ; and genuine, because unusual. I confess myself an ordinary judge indeed, such who believes the obscure and unusual spelling, an evidence of originality and the antiquity of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, more especially as the monosyllables abound in letters, that being, as I have witnessed in old manuscripts, a *remarkable absurdity* of the age.

It is impossible for the profoundest of all Shakespeare's EXPOSITORS to judge *before* the representation of the Plays in question, and indeed these Plays should be seen three or four times ere an absolute opinion be formed. I dare say, if one of them happened to be *Macbeth*, and totally unknown to us (though one of the now esteemed productions of that great Bard) that the rising of the witches in the first scene would create universal laughter, and the *discerning Critics*, out of respect to Shakespeare's name, might be tempted to drive the *Weird Sisters* off the Stage !

As to the familiarity of style, which Mr. Boaden observes, I think it corresponds very much with Shakespeare's epistolary writing—for instance—those letters which he introduces in his Plays.

LETTER

LETTER TO COWLEY,

AND FAC SIMILE of a Pen Drawing, or
 SKETCH of SHAKESPEARE, with his
 Arms and Crest, Two Signatures of his
 Name, &c.

CONCERNING this letter, which is remarkable for its accompaniments, Mr. Boaden observes, that on the authority of the first artists of the country, these Pen and Ink Drawings are modern ;—this is very extraordinary, for I have been told by the *first artists* likewise, that they have every test of antiquity. If Mr. Boaden had mentioned the Gentlemen's names who had made this opposite assertion, I flatter myself I could have mentioned others equally respectable, and whose opinion in this respect, has confirmed mine, that the Papers, Letters, Fac Similia, &c. MAY, according to the BEST conjectures, be the *genuine* work of the supposed authors.

If this Picture was found 37 years ago, when a violent controversy took place respecting the unlikeness of Shakespeare's *Busts*, it might have led to some kind of decision ; for I believe that matter ever re-

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mained in doubt, it being supposed there was no original picture of the Poet in existence. Now after such a violent contest, would it not be DARING in any impostor to attempt a Portrait, or the outlines of this immortal Bard, and offer it as his *OWN?—Imposture never undertakes any thing hazardous, but in a case of absolute necessity, and here it was by no means expedient to add this, or even half of the multiform things produced—those very articles which seem the most unaccountable, are, in my opinion, strong evidences in favour. The works of an impostor are in general correct, and corresponding with facts—WELL KNOWN!

Presuming that some remarks made in the controversy above alluded to, are very proper to be observed on this occasion, I shall give the reader a summary—it will tend to prove the absurdity of *positively* speaking on subjects of doubt and intricacy. The following was the first letter on the subject, dated May 30, 1759.

“ A doubt of a new kind, and not unworthy of
 “ notice, has arisen among some, whether the old
 “ monumental bust of Shakespeare, in the col-
 “ legiate church of Stratford upon Avon, War-

* That Shakespeare had a taste for drawing, no artist can doubt, who reads attentively some passages in his Plays.

wickshire,

“ wickshire, had any resemblance of the Bard :
 “ but I find not this doubt to have taken date be-
 “ fore the public regard shewn to his memory, by
 “ erecting for him the curious cenotaph in West-
 “ minster Abbey : The statue in that honorary
 “ monument is really in a noble attitude, and ex-
 “ cites an awful admiration in the beholder ; the
 “ face is venerable, and well expresses that intense-
 “ ness of serious thought, which the Poet must be
 “ supposed to have sometimes had.

“ The face on the Stratford monument bears
 “ very little, if any resemblance, to that at West-
 “ minster ; the air of it is indeed somewhat
 “ thoughtful, but then it seems to arise from a
 “ cheerfulness of thought, which, I hope, it will
 “ be allowed Shakespeare was no stranger to.
 “ However this be, as the faces on the two monu-
 “ ments are unlike each other, the admirers of that
 “ at Westminster only, will have it, that the coun-
 “ try figure differs as much from the likeness of
 “ the original, as it does from the face in the Ab-
 “ bey, and so far endeavour to deprive it of its
 “ merit : this is a derogation I can by no means
 “ allow of, and that for the following reasons :

“ Shakespeare died at the age of 53. The
 “ unanimous tradition is, that by the uncommon
 “ bounty of the then Earl of Southampton, he

“ was enabled to purchase an house and land
 “ at Stratford, the place of his nativity; to
 “ which place, after quitting the * public stage,
 “ he retired, and lived chearfully among his
 “ friends some time before his death. If we con-
 “ sider these circumstances aright, that Shake-
 “ speare’s disposition was chearful, and that he
 “ died before he could be said to be an old man,
 “ the Stratford figure is no improper representation
 “ of him.

“ The exact time when the country monument
 “ was now erected is unknown; but, I presume, it
 “ was done by his executors, or relations, proba-
 “ bly while his features were fresh in every one’s
 “ memory, and perhaps with the assistance of an ori-
 “ ginal picture too. These are no unreasonable sup-
 “ positions, and which, I think, cannot easily be
 “ overthrown, especially when corroborated (as I
 “ hope to prove they are) by the following observa-
 “ tion, not hitherto made, that I know of, by any one.

“ Facing the title page of one of the folio edi-
 “ tions of Shakespeare’s works, there is an head of
 “ him engraved by one Martin Droeshout, a Dutch-
 “ man, and underneath this cut appear the fol-

* And it is supposed he quitted the stage when he was patron-
 ized as an author. The letter from Queen Elizabeth must, of
 course, have been *before* he had known Lord Southampton.

“ lowing lines, written by Ben Jonson, who personally knew, and was familiarly acquainted with
 “ our Poet.

“ The figure that thou see’st here put,
 “ It was for gentle Shakespeare cut ;
 “ In which the graver had a strife
 “ With nature, to out do the life.
 “ O could he but have drawn his wit
 “ As well in brasse as he hath hit
 “ His face, the piece would then surpass
 “ All that was ever writ in brasse.
 “ But since he cannot, &c.

B. J.

“ In these verses Ben plainly asserts, that if the
 “ engraver could have drawn Shakespeare’s wit
 “ in brasse as well as he has done his face, the performance would have been preferable to every
 “ thing of the kind ; a convincing proof how
 “ great a likeness he knew there was betwixt the
 “ Poet and that picture of him.

“ Now, if we compare this picture with the face
 “ on the Stratford monument, there will be found
 “ as great a resemblance as perhaps can well be
 “ betwixt a statue and a picture, except that
 “ the hair is described rather shorter and straiter
 “ on the latter, than on the former ; and yet this
 “ difference will not, I dare say, be material
 “ enough to justify the doubt I have attempted
 “ to remove ; and, if not, then I hope what I have
 “ here advanced will induce those gentlemen,
 “ who

“ who have not thought so well of the Stratford
 “ monument, to have a better opinion of it for the
 “ time to come.

“ *Stratford upon Avon.*

J. G.”

This letter was immediately contradicted by another, the writer of which, like Mr. B. *insisted*, without authorities, and gives his conjectures as plausible facts.

“ However ingenious and elaborate the differ-
 “ tation of J. G. to prove the statue or effigy of
 “ Shakespeare in the church at Stratford upon
 “ Avon to bear a greater resemblance of him than
 “ that in Westminster Abbey, yet all his seeming
 “ plausible reasoning has little or no foundation
 “ in truth, and perhaps it may be hitherto un-
 “ known to many of your readers, that there is NO
 “ GENUINE PICTURE of Shakespeare existing, nor
 “ EVER WAS, that, called his, having been taken
 “ long after his death from a person supposed ex-
 “ tremely like him, at the direction of Sir Thomas
 “ Clarges, and this I take upon me to affirm as
 “ an absolute fact: the lines he quotes from Ben
 “ Jonson invalidate this assertion not in the least;
 “ for if the above person, from whom the pic-
 “ ture was taken, so much resembled this great
 “ Poet, the compliment of Jonson will then easily
 “ be accounted for. However, if any doubt
 “ should

“ should still remain, it may not be unworthy the
“ learned gentleman, who is shortly to favour the
“ world with a correct edition of his works, and
“ who alone is capable of it, to clear up this
“ point and set it in a true light.”

“ *Crane Court, Aug. 20.*

J. S.”

To this J. G. returned a very laconic answer,
and which I think not at all unapplicable on the
present occasion.

“ I beg leave to let J. S. know, that *positive* as-
“ sertions *without proof*, are as little to be regarded
“ as *probable conjectures*; and therefore unless he
“ proves his own negative, that *there neither is, nor*
“ *ever was any genuine* (I suppose he means *original*)
“ *picture of Shakespeare*, his anecdote of Sir Thomas
“ Clarges is nothing to the purpose, and my con-
“ jectures, for aught he has hitherto proved to the
“ contrary, have their foundation in *truth*.”

“ *Stratford upon Avon, Sept. 15.*

J. G.”

Now, from the present circumstance, I believe
there MAY be an original picture, or likeness, of
Shakespeare; and, if so, J. S. like the generality
of POSITIVE men, was in the wrong.

FAC

FAC SIMILE

OF

SHAKESPEARE'S PROFESSION OF FAITH.

MR. Boaden deems this extraordinary relic a mere rhapsody, and gives a very ludicrous reason (I suppose he means it a *reason*) for declaring it not genuine.

“ My reader will remember, that JOHN SHAKESPEARE, believed to have been the brother of our great poet, composed a paper of this nature, which the industry of the last editors recovered from oblivion.—There was no sufficient reason to be assigned, why the pious disposition of the Bard should in so solemn a declaration of opinion be

“ Lag of a BROTHER.—”

Here Mr. Boaden at once tells us, that *such things have been*, and as I can see no reason, why disgrace should be attached to Shakespeare for being “ Lag of a Brother,” I am of opinion that *such things* MAY be again.

As

As to Mr. Boaden's assertion, that there is no *belief*, only a *pious acquiescence* in this PROFESSION OF FAITH, I must differ in opinion with him; for I think there is a strong belief in the *resurrection* and *immortality of the soul*.

I must acknowledge my antagonist's power of discrimination to be far superior to mine; for really I cannot see that levity, to which he would fain allude, nor that nonsense he terms *exquisite*; but perhaps my judgment is corrupted by the works of the "*present puny hour*."

THE DISCOVERY,

DEED OF GIFT, DRAWINGS, &c.

A Discovery so great as this, must naturally excite curiosity, the WHERE, WHEN, and HOW are all natural questions. Mr Ireland communicates the following information: "He received them from
 " his son, a young man then under 19 years of
 E " age,

“ age, by whom the discovery was accidentally made at the house of a gentleman of considerable property——” But this is not deemed a satisfactory account by some—the gentleman’s name and place of abode are inquired: it seems, however, Mr. Ireland has *promised* not to give this information; and is it surprising, that a gentleman of *considerable property* should, in such a case as this, wish his name to be concealed? Though there are some fools of the day would boast of the treasure, if found in their possession; yet I am convinced, that many would be unwilling to become the very topic of public conversation—to be subject to the untimely visits of impertinent curiosity, and lose all comforts of retirement and ease. But what is worse than all, to become, perhaps, the May-game of some diurnal print whenever there is a *lack of matter*, and be liable to all the paltry sarcasms and insinuations of every miserable paragraph writer. Are not these reasons—strong and substantial reasons for any gentleman to wish concealment, and more particularly *now*, when there are so many unbelievers? Mr. Ireland is highly commendable for his secrecy, and every man of honour must applaud him.

Were these MSS. forged and imposed upon Mr. Ireland, to be imposed again upon the public, would not the ingenious contrivers have fixed
upon

upon some old dwelling for the discovery? this certainly would have been their first consideration: but as no boast is made of the place which had so long concealed these precious relics, certainly there is every appearance of honesty throughout. As to Mr. Boaden's remark on the Christian names of Mr. Ireland's son, I think it unworthy notice—" Criticism so despicably shallow! assertion so miserably fallacious!"

The next thing to be observed is, the " DEED of GIFT to WILLIAM HENRY IRELAND, with fac simile of his signature and seal, regularly attested. In which he gives to the said IRELAND, several plays, and ten pounds for a ring, in testimony of gratitude towards him, for having, at the risque of his own life saved that of SHAKESPEARE, when drowning in the river Thames."—Several learned gentlemen, I understand, who have examined the external evidences of this Deed, are assured of its being genuine, and a corroboration of the originality of all the other papers, &c. But Mr. B. who is more learned than all, sees no *gift* in the Deed—some of the plays he observes were previously printed.—But the manner in which they were *then* printed, can by no means, I think, lessen the donation. Shakespeare's MSS. were *still* valuable. According to the best accounts, it does not appear that more

than eleven of Shakespeare's plays were printed in his lifetime, and we are further informed, that they were not revised by himself, nor even published under his own care, as he had always proved himself regardless of future fame: thus Dr. Johnson writes on the subject, " More than has been
 " suffered by any other writer since the use of
 " types, has been suffered by Shakespeare, through
 " his own negligence of fame, or perhaps by that
 " superiority of mind which despised its own per-
 " formances, when it compared them with its
 " powers——" But Mr. Boaden thinks, being printed, they must have been unproductive; he judges of past times, it seems, by the present, imagining the same emolument to have been derived from dramatic productions which is now acquired. It is impossible for any person to say whether they were productive or not. At some future period they might have been *out of print*, and of course must have been productive then: in short, benefits might have arisen from the possession of them, which we at present are not aware of; but let us suppose them unproductive, are there not many things given to a friend in order to remember the donor—not given with a view to be disposed of, but to be kept as a token of friendship? Among these gifts is the MS. of KING LEAR, which Mr. B. insists was not *then* written. I have already noticed this bold assertion, and must add,
 that

that it was very natural *King Lear* was written long before it was reprinted, it being a subject that required investigation ; for Shakespeare, no doubt, consulted more authors than *Geofrey of Monmouth*, and whatever references to after times may appear, might probably have been owing to future additions and improvements. *Midas* was rendered into various shapes by the author, whose amanuensis declared that the last copy had very little resemblance of the first.

We are also presented with tributary lines to the said Ireland, with the arms of Ireland and those of Shakespeare, linked together by a chain, rudely sketched by himself ; also, pen sketches of Ireland's house, Blackfriars, the arms of both, two signatures of Shakespeare, &c. &c. Such numerous little things as these are very unlikely to be the work of art—NATURE more probably was the parent. Their trivialness bespeaks them not the produce of deception ; for imposture adheres only to the absolute essentials which promote its design : it seldom clogs its purpose with a mass of trifles, and that for two excellent reasons, first, Time and opportunity will not admit of them ; and, secondly, The apprehensions of detection forbid them. All these things considered together, prove, of course, the great probability of these MSS. being genuine, and the great improbability of their being an imposition.

We

We are also presented with a rude Drawing (supposed to be of Shakespear himself in the character) of Bassanio, and another of Shylock ; these Mr. Boaden thinks will find critics in every artist ; but the opinion of artists is, that drawing in colours and on paper is very ancient. In a Treatise on Drawing we read,

“ There is reason to believe that amongst the
 “ first essays of human skill, the art of drawing
 “ had a principal place ; as it is natural for the
 “ hand to form some kind of imitation of what the
 “ eye beholds, it may be supposed that the same
 “ fertile imagination which could invent instru-
 “ ments of music, was not destitute of picturesque
 “ ideas : and that the same hardy ingenuity which
 “ could form into various utensils the massy ore,
 “ might likewise possess talents sufficient for the
 “ application of colours, which required neither
 “ toil nor strength to procure, but were presented
 “ by liberal nature upon the surface of the earth.
 “ If this supposition is just, the arts may claim an
 “ origin of remotest antiquity ; it is certain they
 “ were employed by mankind wherever we can
 “ trace the progress of science, and long before any
 “ period to which our researches can attain.”

Drawing is likewise remarked to have been the favourite amusement of POETS, and no doubt such
 a genius

a genius as Shakespeare, made it occasionally his closet entertainment. No impostor, I think, (as it could by no means assist his purpose) would attempt a representation of the stage dresses at that time.

AGREEMENTS, RECEIPTS, &c.

MR. BOADEN thinks that in Shakespeare's time, they played upon *shares*, according to the present mode of some of our country Theatres. I dare say there *were* Theatres on that plan, but must think Shakespeare, from the habit of playing before the Queen, adopted *salaries*—indeed I make no doubt of it, as I find his *successors* did, and therefore conclude it originated from the inventive genius of Shakespeare. As to the figures denoting *pounds* and *shillings*, I presume, it was optional then—no regularity as I can discover, was observed in accompt books till this century.

If Lowine did perform at the age of nine years, I can see no great wonder—we have *younger* performers at present, and it is very natural to suppose,

pose, on account of the *then* scarcity of actors, and particularly the several juvenile characters which Shakespeare introduced in his Plays, that some of their performers were even *under* twelve years of age.

DEED OF TRUST

TO

J. HEMYNGE.

AS this Deed depreciates the character of Shakespeare in some respects, and varies from his last Will and Testament, it is therefore the more unlikely to have been the work of an impostor—to enquire whether it was rendered null and void by his Stratford Will, would be only losing time—it is most probable it was, and perhaps on that account has been thus *thrown aside*.

Mr. Boaden alluding to the Stratford Will, says,
 “The only property Shakespeare then recollected in
 “London, was a tenement wherein one John Robin-
 binson

binson dwelt, near the Wardrobe in the Black Friars ;” but Mr. Boaden has certainly overlooked what immediately follows—“ All *other* my lands, “ tenements, and hereditaments *whatsoever* ;”—of course, there might have been other property not *particularized*. I shall subjoin a copy of this Stratford Will, as I think it may convince the reader its *undoubted* author and the *doubted* author of the *Profession of Faith*, may in all probability be one and the same. It will likewise shew a *familiarity of style* which was then in use.

COPY OF SHAKESPEARE’S STRATFORD WILL,

EXTRACTED FROM THE REGISTRY OF THE ARCH-
BISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

*Vicesimo quinto die Martii Anno Regni Domini nostri Jacobi
nunc Regis Angliæ, &c. decimo quarto & Scotiæ qua-
dragesimo nono, Anno Domini 1616.*

“ IN the name of God, Amen. I William
“ Shakespeare, of Stratford upon Avon, in the
“ county of Warwick, gent. in perfect health and
“ memory, God be praised, do make and ordain
“ this my last will and testament, in manner and
“ form following ; that is to say :

F

“ First,

“ First, I commend my soul into the hands of
 “ God my Creator, hoping and assuredly believ-
 “ ing, through the only merits of Jesus Christ my
 “ Saviour, to be made partaker of life everlasting ;
 “ and my body to the earth whereof that is made.

“ Item, I give and bequeath unto my daughter
 “ Judith, one hundred and fifty pounds of lawful
 “ English money, to be paid unto her in manner
 “ and form following ; that is to say, one hundred
 “ pounds in discharge of her marriage portion,
 “ within one year after my decease, with conside-
 “ ration after the rate of two shillings in the
 “ pound, for so long as the same shall be unpaid
 “ unto her after my decease ; and the fifty pounds
 “ residue thereof, upon her surrendering of, or
 “ giving of such sufficient security, as the over-
 “ seers of this my will shall like of, to surrender
 “ or grant all her estate and right that shall de-
 “ scend or come unto her after my decease, or that
 “ she now hath of, in, or to one copyhold tene-
 “ ment, with the appurtenances lying and being
 “ in Stratford upon Avon aforesaid, in the said
 “ county of Warwick, being parcel or holden of
 “ the manor of Rowington, unto my daughter
 “ Susannah Hall, and her heirs for ever.

“ Item, I give and bequeath unto my said
 “ daughter Judith one hundred and fifty pounds
 “ more,

“ more, if she, or any issue of her body, be living
 “ at the end of three years next ensuing the day of
 “ the date of this my will, during which time my
 “ executors to pay her consideration from my de-
 “ cease according to the rate aforesaid : and if she
 “ die within the said term without issue of her
 “ body, then my will is and I do give and be-
 “ queath one hundred pounds thereof to my niece
 “ Elizabeth Hall, and the fifty pounds to be set
 “ forth by my executors during the life of my sis-
 “ ter Joan Harte, and the use and profit thereof
 “ coming, shall be paid to my said sister Joan, and
 “ after her decease the fifty pounds shall remain
 “ amongst the children of my said sister, equally
 “ to be divided amongst them ; but if my said
 “ daughter Judith be living at the end of the
 “ said three years, or any issue of her body, then
 “ my will is, and so I devise and bequeath the said
 “ hundred and fifty pounds to be set out by my
 “ executors and overseers for the best benefit of
 “ her and her issue, and the stock not to be paid
 “ unto her so long as she shall be married and
 “ covert baron ; but my will is that she shall have
 “ the consideration yearly paid unto her during
 “ her life, and after her decease the said stock and
 “ consideration to be paid to her children, if she
 “ have any, and if not, to her executors and
 “ assigns, she living the said term after my de-
 “ cease ; provided that if such husband as she shall

‘ at the end of the said three years be married
“ unto, or at, and after, do sufficiently assure un-
“ to her, and the issue of her body, land answer-
“ able to the portion by this my will given unto
“ her, and to be adjudged so by my executors
“ and overseers, then my will is, that the said
“ hundred and fifty pounds shall be paid to such
“ husband, as shall make such assurance, to his
“ own use.

“ Item, I give and bequeath unto my said sister
“ Joan twenty pounds, and all my wearing appa-
“ rel, to be paid and delivered within one year
“ after my decease ; and I do will and devise unto
“ her the house with the appurtenances in Strat-
“ ford, wherein she dwelleth, for her natural life,
“ under the yearly rent of twelve-pence.

“ Item, I give and bequeath unto her three
“ sons, William Hart, — — Hart, and Michael
“ Hart, five pounds apiece, to be paid within one
“ year after my decease.

“ Item, I give and bequeath unto the said Eli-
“ zabeth Hall all my plate that I now have, ex-
“ cept my broad silver and gilt boxes, at the date
“ of this my will.

“ Item,

“ Item, I give and bequeath unto the poor of
 “ Stratford aforesaid, ten pounds, to Mr. Tho-
 “ mas Combe my sword, to Thomas Ruffel, Esq.
 “ five pounds, and to Francis Collins of the bo-
 “ rough of Warwick, gent. thirteen pounds, six
 “ shillings, and eight-pence, to be paid within one
 “ year after my decease.

“ Item, I give and bequeath to Hamlet Sadler
 “ twenty-six shillings, eight pence to buy him a
 “ ring; to William Reynolds, gent. twenty-six
 “ shillings, eight pence to buy him a ring; to my
 “ godson, William Walker twenty shillings in
 “ gold; to Anthony Nash, gent. twenty-six shil-
 “ lings eight pence; and to Mr. John Nash,
 “ twenty six shillings, eight pence; and to my
 “ fellows John Hemynge, Richard Burbage, and
 “ Henry Cundell, twenty six shillings eight pence
 “ apiece to buy the rings.

“ Item, I give, will, bequeath, and devise unto my
 “ daughter Susanna Hall, for the better enabling
 “ of her to perform this my will, and towards the
 “ performance thereof, all that capital messuage or
 “ tenement, with the appurtenances in Stratford
 “ aforesaid, called the New Place, wherein I now
 “ dwell, and two messuages or tenements, with the
 “ appurtenances, situate, lying, and being in Henley
 “ Street within the borough of Stratford aforesaid;
 “ and

“ and all my barns, stables, orchards, gardens,
 “ lands, tenements, and hereditaments whatsoever,
 “ situate, lying, and being, or to be had, reserved,
 “ preserved or taken within the towns, hamlets,
 “ villages, fields, and grounds of Stratford upon
 “ Avon, Old Stratford, Bushaxton, and Wel-
 “ combe, or in any of them, in the said county of
 “ Warwick; and also all that messuage or tene-
 “ ment, with the appurtenances, wherein one
 “ John Robinson dwelleth, situate, lying, and
 “ being in the Black-Friars in London, near the
 “ Wardrobe; and all other my lands, tenements,
 “ and hereditaments whatsoever; to have and to
 “ hold all and singular the said premises, with their
 “ appurtenances, unto the said Susanna Hall, for
 “ and during the term of her natural life; and after
 “ her decease to the first son of her body, lawfully
 “ issuing, and to the heirs males of the first son
 “ lawfully issuing; and for default of such issue, to
 “ the second son of her body lawfully issuing, and
 “ to the heirs males of the body of the said second
 “ son lawfully issuing; and for default of such
 “ heirs to the third son of the said Susanna law-
 “ fully issuing, and of the heirs males of the body
 “ of the said third son lawfully issuing; and for
 “ default of such issue, the same to be and remain
 “ to the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh sons of
 “ her body lawfully issuing, one after another, and
 “ the heirs males of the bodies of the said fourth,
 “ fifth,

“ fifth, sixth, and seventh sons lawfully issuing,
 “ in such manner as it is before limited to be and
 “ remain to the first, second, and third sons of her
 “ body, and to their heirs males; and for default
 “ of such issue, the said premises to be and remain
 “ to my said niece Hall, and the heirs males of her
 “ body lawfully issuing; and for default of such
 “ issue, to my daughter Judith, and the heirs
 “ males of her body lawfully issuing; and for de-
 “ fault of such issue, to the right heirs of me the
 “ said William Shakespeare for ever.

“ I give unto my wife my brown best bed with
 “ the furniture.

“ Item, I give and bequeath to my said daugh-
 “ ter Judith my broad silver gilt bole. All the
 “ rest of my goods, chattels, leases, plate, jewels,
 “ and household stuff whatsoever, after my debts
 “ and legacies paid, and my funeral expences dis-
 “ charged, I give, devise, and bequeath to my
 “ son-in-law, John Hall, gent. and my daughter
 “ Susanna his wife, who I ordain and make exe-
 “ cutors of this my last will and testament. And
 “ I do entreat and appoint the said Thomas Ruf-
 “ fel, Esq. and Francis Collins, gent. to be over-
 “ seers hereof. And do revoke all former wills,
 “ and publish this to be my last will and testa-
 “ ment. In witness whereof I have hereunto put
 “ my

“ my hand, the day and year first above-written,
“ by me,

“ WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

“ *Witness to the publishing hereof,*

“ Fra. Collins,

“ Julius Shaw,

“ John Robinson,

“ Hamlett Sadler,

“ Robert Whattcott.

“ *Probatum coram Magistro William Byrde Legum Doc-*
“ *tore Commissario, &c. vicesimo secundo die Mensis*
“ *Junii Anno Domini, 1616. Juramento Johannis*
“ *Hall unius ex. et cui, &c. de bene et jurat reservata*
“ *potestate et Susannæ Hall alt. ex. &c. cu vendit, &c.*
“ *petitur,”*

PROMISSORY NOTE TO HEMYNGE.

THIS note being an acknowledgment for services received of Hemynge by Shakespeare in 1589, is objected to; because in that year Hemynge married, and of course was not at leisure to serve

serve Shakespeare either at the Globe or Stratford: Mr. Boaden should have given some examples of this *extraordinary complacency* in ancient husbands: the ladies, I am sure, would have been thankful if he had; for they might have served as lessons for *modern spouses*, who, I am persuaded, are not so very uxorious as to decline, even during the *honey-moon*, an act or two of friendship. Now were we to conclude by some parts of history, we might say the gentlemen of yore were so indifferent about hymeneal happiness, that they neglected no business whatever for their wives; and I am told, that even to this day there are *some* husbands so ill-natured as not to suffer *female conversation* to interfere with business. But admitting Mr. Hemynge to be the fondest, kindest, and most complaisant husband wife was ever blest with, might not he have taken *his lady* with him? Surely *Mrs.* Hemynge might have taken a jaunt with her good man to Stratford. To avert this supposition, Mr. Boaden should have proved the weather very bad.—Forgive, reader, this incoherent stile, and impute it my *ingenious* antagonist's, whose arguments admit of no *serious* replies!

LEASE FROM SHAKESPEARE

TO

MICHAEL FRAZER, &c.

OF this Mr. Boaden says very little; his only objection is the mention of the Globe at *Blackfriars*; but from what I have already said, I presume the Globe company might have been any where, and most indubitably they performed at Blackfriars by candle light. In two centuries hence it may be disputed whether *Drury-Lane* was ever in the *Hay-Market*, or *Astley's Company* at the Lyceum.

From a host of evidences I confess myself inclined to think these papers genuine, and must observe, in the language of a very ingenious writer some few months ago on a similar case, that

“ the existence of demonstrable proofs are not
 “ always necessary to impress belief. The united
 “ rays of many probabilities very often amount
 “ to an elucidation; and the collected feathers of
 “ many inconsiderable arguments are often sufficient to preponderate the scales of uncertainty.

“ Let

“ Let it also be remembered, that those who have
 “ the assistance of ocular evidence have, in cases
 “ like the present, an advantage that the greatest
 “ learning and the utmost ingenuity are not able
 “ to supply.”

Though Mr. Ireland's zeal in defending these papers have drawn upon him the ridicule of our would-be wits, still I think it a commendable trait in his character, nor can I conceive that the compliments he has bestowed upon the FATHER of the English Stage, amount to more idolatry than the lavish praises of Sir William Davenport, Sir Charles Sidney, Dr. Johnson, &c. nay even of modern writers. For example,

—————“ With mingled awe and love,
 “ I think of Him, the brightest spirit above,
 “ Who triumphs over time and fickle forms,
 “ The changes of caprice, and passion's storms;
 “ Whose mighty Muse the subject world must bind,
 “ While sense and nature charm the willing mind.

EPILOGUE TO FENTAINVILLE FOREST.”

These words are supposed to come from Mr. Boarden's own lips as well as his pen, when his * SPIRIT essayed an imitation of Shakespeare; but that it was a mere *shadow* indeed

“ We need no GHOST to come and tell us that.”

* The Ghost in Fentainville Forest.

BOOKS WITH MARGINAL NOTES, &c.

WHAT stronger evidence can there be in favour of the MSS. than the present, of which Mr. Boaden takes no notice? Here is a catalogue of above eleven hundred books (supposed to be Shakespeare's library) with a great number of the books themselves, filled with curious marginal notes, strictly corresponding with the known autography of that illustrious Poet. Now, the complexion of the business is such, that when seriously considered altogether, I think it morally impossible that any man, however ingenious and accustomed to art, could ever have completed so laborious an undertaking; for the uniformity of the hand-writing is throughout so apparent, that the autography must evidently have been the work of *one person only*.

The design of imposture in general is to acquire a reward suitable to the danger incurred by its nefarious undertaking. But what was there to be gained by this? There was no certainty of success, and much less of any emolument. How were these books collected, as well the paper and legal instruments? I cannot suppose that so many old
books

books could have been *secretly* obtained ; detection no doubt would have followed ; the venders would have recollected them, and the matter be soon buzzed about. No ordinary reader, could have made the notes, nor no ingenious reader either, from a cursory view ; then how much time must have been spent to a purpose very ambiguous ? how much money expended, and upon what speculation ? for certainly any person capable of writing a Play, which resembled in any degree the immortal Shakespeare, would much rather (where there was no hazard of risking reputation, and some prospect of acquiring fame) have sent it avowedly to one or other of the managers (whose liberality to genius is well known) and submitted it to the candour of an English audience, without exposing it to *double* criticism. Who, in the name of Heaven, would have employed all their lifetime in a work of so much toil, and magnitude, where there was neither surety of success, nor expectation of reward ?

The writing in the books obviates all those insinuations, that art and chymical means might have been employed to have rendered it seemingly decayed. To effect this, every bit of the books must have been taken to pieces, and binding them over again would have consequently evinced the deception.

Take

Take the whole mass together, and is it reasonable to suppose, that any man, or *set of men*, would have issued such strange fabrications, and such multiform inventions, for the sake of one object, which can only appear to view, viz. *Bringing out on the stage two manuscript Plays, asserted to be written by William Shakespeare?* Where was the utility of the drawings, and those several miscellaneous papers to aid such a design? for though they all serve to corroborate the opinion that they have been, *bonâ fide*, part of the toil and produce of our great Poet, they would never have struck an impostor as coinage necessary for his purpose; he would have foreseen the danger of venturing so deeply; he would have also been guarded against all work that would have admitted of a doubt: therefore the seeming inconsistencies in those MSS. tend only to heighten the evidence in their favour. No man, from motives of imposing a MS. as Shakespeare's on the public, would have attempted an imitation of Queen Elizabeth's writing, &c.—Earl of Southampton's, &c. &c. It was not only encreasing the labour, but the danger of detection; therefore I think the argument of the improbability, nay, almost *impossibility*, of a fabrication, more strong, and to the purpose, than saying, “ If I “ prove they are not genuine, they must of course “ be forged——” for how are they to be proved not genuine?, from *conjecture*! And I trust that I have

have proved that *conjecture* may be answered and contradicted by *conjecture* equally as fair and forcible. The most elaborate of all our commentators and expositors cannot ascertain their remarks; how many have varied in their constructions of some parts of Shakespeare? And I warrant that several beauties were found in his Plays which were never intended as such by the author, while passages which perhaps the author delighted in, have been overlooked by us. I respect the opinion of Doctor Johnson; yet the Doctor has sometimes been mistaken; I respect the judgment of Pope; yet Pope's Shakespeare was reckoned the worst, and that of Theobald's, the former hero of his *Dunciad*, preferred. And were all our former geniuses now living, Swift, Samuel Johnson, &c. &c. and were they to tell me these manuscripts were not genuine, I would beg leave to judge *for myself*; it is a prerogative which I think belongs to the most common understanding; it is a prerogative which every true born Englishman should maintain; and that man who obtrudes his opinion as the leader of all others, betrays more arrogance than sense. Let Vortigern be tried by a JURY of *Boxes, Pit, and Galleries*; the verdict of "Genuine," or "Not Genuine," belongs to THEM only; and it is impossible to judge of a Play before representation. We are told in Granger's Biography, (vol. ii.) in a note upon Shakespeare's Plays, that readers

ders and actors are incapable of judging thereof, till they are performed ; for that the beauties of several of HIS dramas are not conspicuous but on the stage ; and this remark is very judiciously enforced by an observation, that several of his Plays were lying by till the good acting of Garrick restored them to the stage. We find Shakespeare, in his own time, was only celebrated as a DRAMATIC Poet. We should not therefore decide too hastily upon the fragments published—some, doubtless, of which were never intended for the public eye by Shakespeare, and therefore stronger evidences in the present case.

It must be owned, that Mr. Ireland, by the publication of those fragments, evinces great ingenuity on his side ; but we should not from these *Data* presume to anticipate the merits or demerits of either of the expected Plays. JOHN BULL is no *Calf* to be led away by every *Ass*—He had rather, I dare say, (being an honest, uninfluenced, blunt character,) that VORTIGERN and the Play succeeding may be the genuine Works of SHAKESPEARE ; that the Stage, too long disgraced with pantomimes in prose and metre, may resume its wonted dignity, become the school of genius again, and be no longer disgraced with modern frivolities, the *comical* tragedies and *tragical* comedies of the day.

PRETENDED

PRETENDED IMITATIONS.

OUR discerning Critic, for such he has the modesty to name himself, concludes with what he calls Extracts from VORTIGERN : not the Play which is the subject of doubt, but Mr. Boaden's own Vortigern. This it is necessary to state, because a careless reader, from the artful manner in which it is displayed in the title-page, &c. may think it is the Play professed to be Shakespeare's, and thence form a judgment of its merits : a circumstance which would favour Mr. Boaden's design more than he or any other *discerning Critic* could otherwise effect. Is it for this purpose he produces these imaginary extracts ? He says—no—it is because some of his friends flatter him they are worthy to be collected, (for they have before this dignified some diurnal publication) and hence, says he, no argument can be drawn from the merit of these other MSS. as compositions, or in any wise from their resemblance to Shakespeare, as a proof of originality—their resembling in manner and style that of the great Bard, being no argument, because HERE they are imitated. Flattery is certainly a very pleasant thing, and far be it from the writer of this, to disturb one who seems so happy

H

in

in it ; and undisturbed indeed should he be, if he did not bring it with him into controversy. Sure that which could induce any sober man to suppose for a moment, that these alternately bombastic and grovelling extracts resembled Shakespeare, must have been administered with a very skilful hand, or favoured with a good digestion on the patient's part. To this perhaps alluded the pseudo Peter Pindar, (who failed totally in *his* imitation) author of the abusive Poem of the CAP, which he awards to Mr. Boaden for having (in his own opinion) given BILLY the GO-BY—meaning, I suppose, his having *surpassed* WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE. Were such extracts as the *Vortigern of Mr. Boaden* produced by Mr. Ireland, as the production of the pen of Shakespeare, though there were a crowd of probable evidence to favour the opinion, impartial judgment could not hesitate to say, “ You are an impostor, or the dupe of one ;” as such he would be treated, no question could be made of the matter : it bears too strongly the character of a puny witling of the present time, to deceive for a moment. The resemblance goes not beyond the short-lived *pantomimical* tragedies of the day, which the genial warmth of managerial favour brings into existence, only to be chilled by the frost of popular neglect.

The

The only place where I can see any similitude of Shakespeare, is in a few words of the second line of the following, palpably borrowed from Shylock in his *Merchant of Venice*.—

“ CONSTAS.—But thinke upon my Order and my Oathe !
 “ O laye *not perjurie upon my soule*,
 “ That, vow’d to Heav’n and nothing temporal,
 “ May not encline to your most friendly counsel. page 59

The foliloquy of Vortigern, wherein he modestly tells us, his designs are MOST MASTERLY EXHIBITED, is meant to be an imitation of MACBETH—but alas, when he mentions *pillow* and *downe*,

“ BOADEN doth murder SLEEP.”

The second line in the following I dont think Mr. Boaden *reckoned on his fingers*, or he must certainly have had the misfortune of *losing one* ; and as to the fourth line, I think it every bit as bad as that in the MS. of *King Lear*, which so offended *his ear*.

“ HENG.—For our religione, Kinge, knowe thatte wee wor
 “ shippe
 “ Woden *especially, who gives name*
 “ To the fourthe daye of everye weeke of time.
 “ *Nexte to himme we adore the Goddess FREA*,
 “ Fromme whome the fixthe daye claimes ittes honoured
 “ name.” page 65

Whoever wish to STEAL *discernment*, may contemplate the following lines :

“ I hadde not hearde your Majestie foe farre,
 “ But thatte a most usurpinge wonder stole
 “ *Discernmente* from youre lowly Servantes minde. page 67

—————“ Bye the SAINTED CHAIRE
 “ Of holie Paule”————

I never read such nonsense before !——

What *discerning Critic* could mistake the font from whence these melodious lines have flowed——

“ Her breastes were two faire hilles, upon whose toppes
 “ The dazzinge chastite of snowe didde reste :
 “ While from her eyes a holie fire did streame,
 “ Thatte whyle it kindled flame in grosser moulde,
 “ Left those pure icye summits ever cold.
 “ Yette on her cheekes such flushing brightness spreade,
 “ As the soft cloude beare whenne the amorous sunne
 “ Carelesse them, and blusbes painte the Weste. page 68

How different the orthography of this from the first quotation made from page 59. Even here Mr. Boaden wants uniformity.

Another *specimen* of incongruity and bombast !

“ Mye father looks but with Rowena's eyes,
 “ And they with murky frowns doe loue upon mee,
 “ Threateninge like heavy cloude in summers haunce
 “ The nimble barred of the lightninges hidden !

“ Whatte

" What if I flye and hedde the Britaine bandes !
 " *Howe Vortimer ! a rebell to thy Kinge !*
 " That Kinge a father too ! O wretched state !—
 " O bosome, tortured betweene love and dutye !—
 " Maye notte hostilitye at times be mercye,
 " *As the wise Leech from bodilye gangrene*
 " *Preserves the noble partes by amputatioun ?*
 " Hence to ARMORICA ! *this truthe Ile sweare,*
 " *A filial dutye in a seeminge foe !*
 " Lette Heaven but shape mye endes !

The *wisest* leech that can be found, deals more
 in *suction*, I presume, than *amputation*; but this
 no doubt, is a *poetical licence* to make out the mea-
 sure. If the two first words of the sixth line had
 been transposed, would it not have read better ?
 e. g. *Vortimer—howe ?* &c.

In the next passage which is " *FORCIBLY to re-
 mind the reader of AS YOU LIKE IT,*" we meet with
 the following elegant lines—but in these, I think
 the author has been more happy in imitating *Nat
 Lee* than *WILL SHAKESPEARE*.

" *QUEENE.—The storme growes lowder, and the angrye*
 heavens
 " *Doe write theire wrathe in characters of fire,*
 " *The blinde might reade and tremble."*

Again,—

" The sleeplefs windes
 " Doe *WALKE* on their greate errandes."

Flattery

Flattery it must be indeed, that could tell any man that those lines resemble Shakespeare, and decisive must the opinion of him be, who could be persuaded by his friends, that there's the most distant similarity to the manner—the style—or any thing wherein imitation can consist. It would be an insult on the commonest understanding to compare them. But how does he argue?—Let no resemblance of the MSS. to the productions of Shakespeare be deemed a proof of originality, because here follows an imitation.”—Allowing all the merit which *his friends* attribute, or he himself believes; his modesty here is very much to be praised. Every would-be imitator of Shakespeare has hitherto failed: Rowe, no despicable author, and who did not want to build his fame on so poor a foundation, wrote his *Jane Shore* professedly with such an intention; but though he produced a good Play, he did not succeed. Dr. Johnson said he did not produce the *least* similitude, and it was the Doctor's opinion, that no one in the world could produce a Play throughout like Shakespeare. I could mention some recent attempts, which instead of being imitations, have proved absolute *parodies*, and confirmed the absurd vanity (according to Mr. Boaden's paradox) of *imitating* the INIMITABLE. Then it seems it must have been reserved for Mr. Boaden *alone* (at least in the opinion of his friends) to effect that, which he thinks every attempt to accomplish,

compleish, has miscarried—and certainly the public have to congratulate themselves, if the MSS. in the possession of Mr. Ireland are *forgeries*, that Mr. Boaden was not concerned in the business, for then detection would be vain. Who is bold enough to say that he could distinguish “ the glowing diction” above recited—“ that which results from the happiest choice of words in the sweetest consonancy of numbers, combining from the ideas of the Poet, selected by character, and vivified by genius”—from the Songs of the Swan sweet Avon itself? unless some sagacious elf would discover that the former was more of the *Goose*!

Surely Mr. B. ought not to argue from his *own* powers of writing like Shakespeare, that any other person can—certainly not—he ought to have a higher opinion of his own genius, than to measure that of others by such a standard. No person has yet lived who could do it with success, except *him alone*; and as he professes not to be the author of the Plays in question, the conclusion will be a fair one; “ That if the MSS. resemble Shakespeare’s stile, &c. they are original, and Mr. I. no impostor, as Mr. B. would, with as much politeness as ability, insinuate——” Had any other person written so, it would be naturally suggested

gested that his *anger* arose from a pique, that *he* was not made a confederate in the fabrication of the said manuscripts, and had given thus a specimen of *his* ability to convince the persons concerned of *their* folly in excluding him from their council. Or a more probable supposition, (one, I hear, that has gone abroad) is, that Mr. B. himself has found, or was about to find, some other manuscripts of that Poet. The former would account for the resemblance of his extracts, the latter for the virulence and inanity of the attack which he has made on the papers of Mr. Ireland. But, to be serious, the judgment of the public is not to be led thus by every man who thus pleases to stand up—nominate himself a critic, and determine whether the manuscripts are to be accepted as original, or condemned as spurious. The judgment of that man will have little weight who will in one moment say, “Such and such are not like Shakespeare; but look here—here, I have written what breathes the spirit of that illustrious Poet——” Such presumption and folly deserve contempt and ridicule.

Allowing all that has been said against the manuscripts, the credit which the writer of the *Critical Examination* wishes, still it reaches only to probability, which the intrinsic merit of the piece must immediately overturn; that merit, the only standard,

dard, it will, or ought to be judged by : it is by this alone that it will stand or fall ; no such attack as that we have now examined will depreciate it—a British audience judge for themselves ; they will “ Hear all, and then let justice weigh the scale.”

“ There are a sort of men, whose visages
“ Do cream and mantle like a standing pond,
“ And do a wilful stillness entertain
“ With purpose to be dress’d in an opinion
“ Of Wisdom—Gravity—profound Conceit !
“ As who should say ‘ I am Sir ORACLE,
“ And when I ope my lips let no dog bark !”

SHAKESPEARE.

FINIS.





